

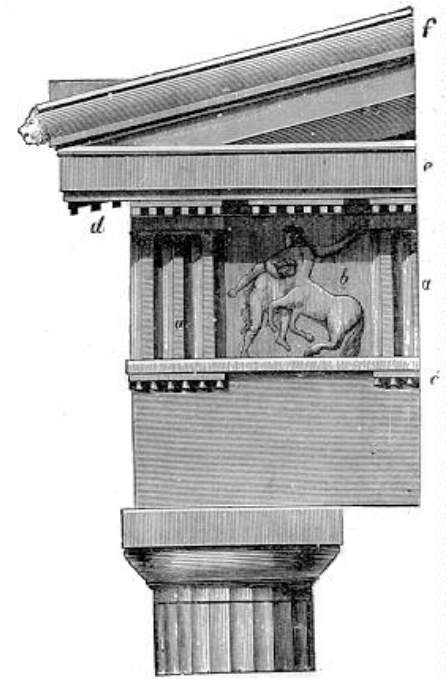
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Doric order

The **Doric order** was one of the three orders of ancient Greek and later Roman architecture; the other two canonical orders were the Ionic and the Corinthian. The Doric is most easily recognized by the simple circular capitals at the top of columns. Originating in the western Doric region of Greece, it is the earliest and, in its essence, the simplest of the orders, though still with complex details in the entablature above.

The Greek Doric column was fluted or smooth-surfaced,^[1] and had no base, dropping straight into the stylobate or platform on which the temple or other building stood. The capital was a simple circular form, with some mouldings, under a square cushion that is very wide in early versions, but later more restrained. Above a plain architrave, the complexity comes in the frieze, where the two features originally unique to the Doric, the triglyph and guttae, are skeuomorphic memories of the beams and retaining pegs of the wooden constructions that preceded stone Doric temples.^[2] In stone they are purely ornamental. The relatively uncommon Roman and Renaissance Doric retained these, and often introduced thin layers of moulding or further ornament, as well as often using plain columns. More often they used versions of the Tuscan order, elaborated for nationalistic reasons by Italian Renaissance writers, which is in effect a simplified Doric, with un-fluted columns and a simpler entablature with no triglyphs or guttae. The Doric order was much used in Greek Revival architecture from the 18th century onwards; often earlier Greek versions were used, with wider columns and no bases to them.

The ancient architect and architectural historian Vitruvius associates the Doric with masculine proportions (the Ionic representing the feminine).^{[3][4]} It is also normally the cheapest of the orders to use. When the three orders are superposed, it is usual for the Doric to be at the bottom, with the Ionic and then the Corinthian above, and the Doric, as "strongest", is often used on the ground floor below another order in the storey above.^[5]



The Doric Order in the Parthenon at Athens.

The Doric order of the Parthenon. Triglyphs marked "a", metopes "b", guttae "c" and mutules under the soffit "d"



Two early Archaic Doric order Greek temples at Paestum (Italy) with much wider capitals than later

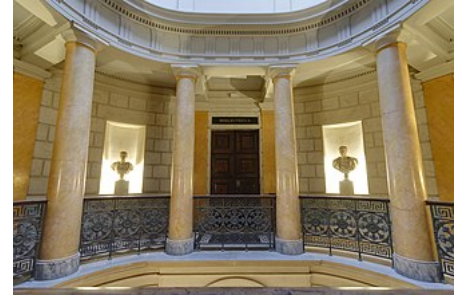
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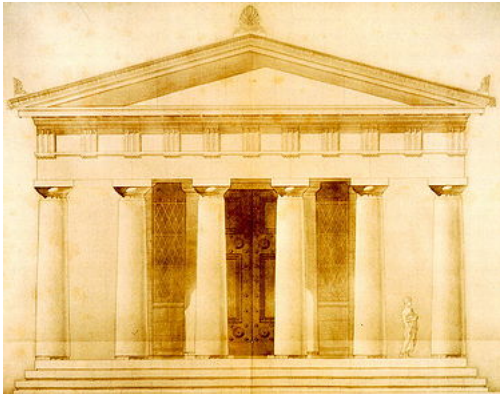
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Entry to the [Bibliothèque Mazarine](#) (Paris), with four Doric columns in this photo

History

Greek



[Temple of the Delians](#), [Delos](#); 19th-century pen-and-wash drawing

In their original Greek version, Doric [columns](#) stood directly on the flat pavement (the *stylobate*) of a [temple](#) without a base. With a height only four to eight times their diameter, the columns were the most squat of all the classical orders; their vertical shafts were fluted with 20 parallel concave [grooves](#) called [arrises](#); and they were topped by a smooth [capital](#) that flared from the column to meet a square [abacus](#) at the intersection with the horizontal [beam](#) ([architrave](#)) that they carried. The [Parthenon](#) has the Doric design columns. It was most popular in the [Archaic Period](#) (750–480 BC) in mainland Greece, and also found in [Magna Graecia](#) (southern Italy), as in the three temples at [Paestum](#). These are in the Archaic Doric, where the capitals spread wide from the column compared to later Classical forms, as exemplified in the Parthenon.

Pronounced features of both Greek and Roman versions of the Doric order are the alternating [triglyphs](#) and [metopes](#). The triglyphs are decoratively grooved with two vertical grooves ("tri-glyph") and represent the original wooden end-beams, which rest on the plain architrave that occupies the lower half of the entablature. Under each triglyph are peglike "stagoons" or "guttae" (literally: drops) that appear as if they were hammered in from below to stabilize the post-and-beam (trabeated) construction. They also served to "organize" rainwater runoff from above. The spaces between the triglyphs are the "metopes". They may be left plain, or they may be carved in low relief.^[6]

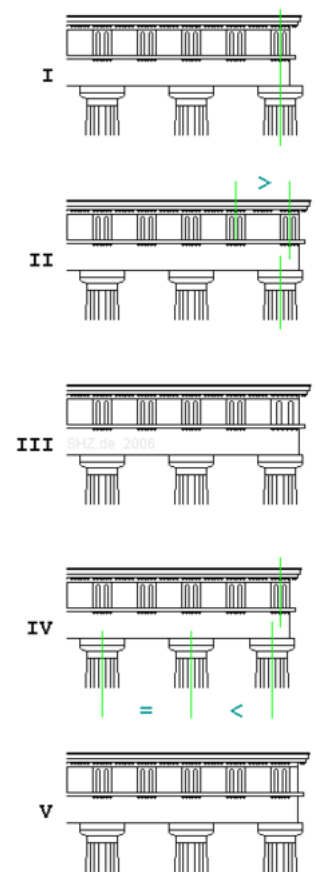
Spacing the triglyphs

The spacing of the triglyphs caused problems which took some time to resolve. A triglyph is centered above every column, with another (or sometimes two) between columns, though the Greeks felt that the corner triglyph should form the corner of the entablature, creating an inharmonious mismatch with the supporting column.

The architecture followed rules of harmony. Since the original design probably came from wooden temples and the triglyphs were real heads of wooden beams, every column had to bear a beam which lay across the centre of the column. Triglyphs were arranged regularly; the last triglyph was centred upon the last column (*illustration, right: I.*). This was regarded as the ideal solution which had to be reached.

Changing to stone cubes instead of wooden beams required full support of the architrave load at the last column. At the first temples the final triglyph was moved (*illustration, right: II.*), still terminating the sequence, but leaving a gap disturbing the regular order. Even worse, the last triglyph was not centered with the corresponding column. That "archaic" manner was not regarded as a harmonious design. The resulting problem is called **the doric corner conflict**. Another approach was to apply a broader corner triglyph (*III.*) but was not really satisfying.

Because the metopes are somewhat flexible in their proportions, the modular space between columns ("intercolumniation") can be adjusted by the architect. Often the last two columns were set slightly closer together (*corner contraction*), to give a subtle visual strengthening to the corners. That is called the "classic" solution of the corner conflict (*IV.*). Triglyphs could be arranged in a harmonic manner again, and the corner was terminated with a triglyph, though the final triglyph and column were often not centered. Roman aesthetics did not demand that a triglyph form the corner, and filled it with a half (*demi-*) metope, allowing triglyphs centered over columns (*illustration, right, V.*).



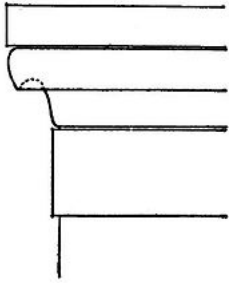
The Doric corner conflict

Temples

There are many theories as to the origins of the Doric order in temples. The term Doric is believed to have originated from the Greek-speaking Dorian tribes.^[7] One belief is that the Doric order is the result of early wood prototypes of previous temples.^[8] With no hard proof and the sudden appearance of stone temples from one period after the other, this becomes mostly speculation. Another belief is that the Doric was inspired by the architecture of Egypt.^[9] With the Greeks being present in Ancient Egypt as soon as the 7th-century BC, it is possible that Greek traders were inspired by the structures they saw in what they would consider foreign land. Finally, another theory states that the inspiration for the Doric came from Mycenae. At the ruins of this civilization lies architecture very similar to the Doric order. It is also in Greece, which would make it very accessible.

Some of the earliest examples of the Doric order come from the 7th-century BC. These examples include the Temple of Apollo at Corinth and the Temple of Zeus at Nemea.^[10] Other examples of the Doric order include the 6th-century BC temples at Paestum in southern Italy, a region called Magna Graecia, which was settled by Greek colonists. Compared to later versions, the columns are much more massive, with a strong entasis or swelling, and wider capitals.

The Temple of the Delians is a "peripteral" Doric order temple, the largest of three dedicated to Apollo on the island of Delos. It was begun in 478 BC and never completely finished. During their period of independence from Athens, the Delians reassigned the temple to the island of Poros. It is "hexastyle", with six columns across the pedimented end and thirteen along each long face. All the columns are centered under a triglyph in the frieze, except for the corner columns. The plain, unfluted shafts on the columns stand directly on the platform (the *stylobate*), without bases. The recessed "necking" in



Left image: Characteristic shape of the Doric anta capital.



Right image: Doric anta capital at the Athenian Treasury (c. 500 BC).

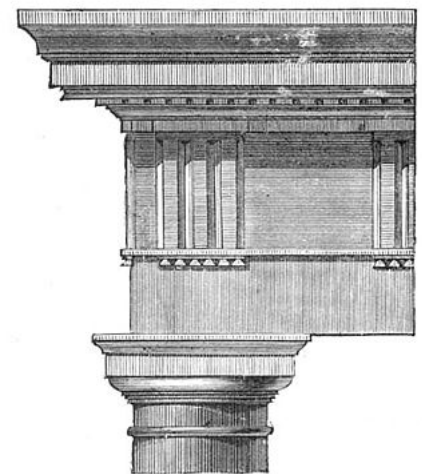
the nature of fluting at the top of the shafts and the wide cushionlike echinus may be interpreted as slightly self-conscious archaizing features, for Delos is Apollo's ancient birthplace. However, the similar fluting at the base of the shafts might indicate an intention for the plain shafts to be capable of wrapping in drapery.

Hephaestus in Athens, built about 447 BC. The contemporary Parthenon, the largest temple in classical Athens, is also in the Doric order, although the sculptural enrichment is more familiar in the Ionic order: the Greeks were never as doctrinaire in the use of the Classical vocabulary as Renaissance theorists or Neoclassical architects. The detail, part of the basic vocabulary of trained architects from the later 18th century onwards, shows how the width of the metopes was flexible: here they bear the famous sculptures including the battle of Lapiths and Centaurs.

A classic statement of the Greek Doric order is the Temple of

Roman

In the Roman Doric version, the height of the entablature has been reduced. The endmost triglyph is centered over the column rather than occupying the corner of the architrave. The columns are slightly less robust in their proportions. Below their caps, an astragal molding encircles the column like a ring. Crown moldings soften transitions between frieze and cornice and emphasize the upper edge of the abacus, which is the upper part of the capital. Roman Doric columns also have moldings at their bases and stand on low square pads or are even raised on plinths. In the Roman Doric mode, columns are not invariably fluted. Since the Romans did not insist on a triglyph covered corner, now both columns and triglyphs could be arranged equidistantly again and centered together. The architrave corner needed to be left "blank," which is sometimes referred to as a half, or *demi*-, metope (*illustration, V., in Spacing the Columns above*).



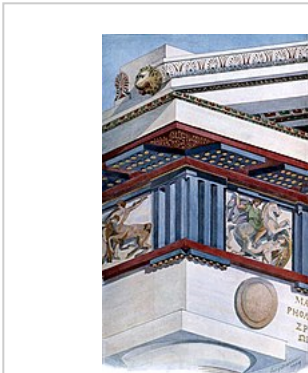
The Roman Doric order from the Theater of Marcellus: triglyphs centered over the end column

The Roman architect Vitruvius, following contemporary practice, outlined in his treatise the procedure for laying out constructions based on a module, which he took to be one half a column's diameter, taken at the base. An illustration of Andrea Palladio's Doric order, as it was laid out, with modules identified, by Isaac Ware, in *The Four Books of Palladio's Architecture* (London, 1738) is illustrated at Vitruvian module.

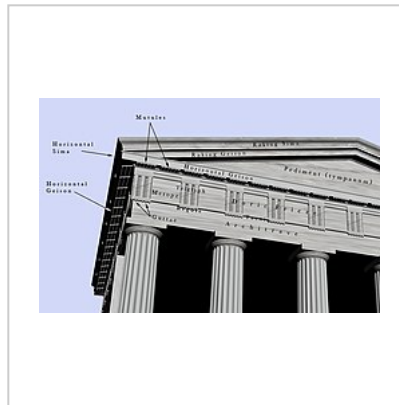
According to Vitruvius, the height of Doric columns is six or seven times the diameter at the base.^[11] This gives the Doric columns a shorter, thicker look than Ionic columns, which have 8:1 proportions. It is suggested that these proportions give the Doric columns a masculine appearance, whereas the more slender Ionic columns appear to represent a more feminine look. This sense of masculinity and femininity was often used to determine which type of column would be used for a particular structure.

The most influential, and perhaps the earliest, use of the Doric in Renaissance architecture was in the circular *Tempietto* by Donato Bramante (1502 or later), in the courtyard of San Pietro in Montorio, Rome.^[12]

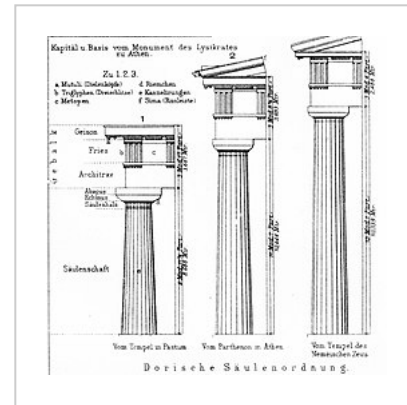
Graphics of ancient forms



Original Doric polychromy



Upper parts, labelled



Three Greek Doric columns



The Five Orders, originally illustrated by Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola, 1640

Modern

Before Greek Revival architecture grew, initially in England, in the 18th century, the Greek or elaborated Roman Doric order had not been very widely used, though "Tuscan" types of round capitals were always popular, especially in less formal buildings. It was sometimes used in military contexts, for example the Royal Hospital Chelsea (1682 onwards, by Christopher Wren). The first engraved illustrations of the Greek Doric order dated to the mid-18th century. Its appearance in the new phase of Classicism brought with it new connotations of high-minded primitive simplicity, seriousness of purpose, noble sobriety.

In Germany it suggested a contrast with the French, and in the United States republican virtues. In a customs house, Greek Doric suggested incorruptibility; in a Protestant church a Greek Doric porch promised a return to an untainted early church; it was equally appropriate for a library, a bank or a



The Grange (nearby Northampton, England), 1804, Europe's first house designed with all external detail of a Greek temple

trustworthy public utility. The revived Doric did not return to Sicily until 1789, when a French architect researching the ancient Greek temples designed an entrance to the Botanical Gardens in Palermo.

Examples

Ancient Greek, Archaic

- Temple of Artemis, Corfu, the earliest known stone Doric temple
- Temple of Hera, Olympia
- Delphi, temple of Apollo
- The three temples at Paestum, Italy
- Valle dei Templi, Agrigento, Temple of Juno, Agrigento and others
- Temple of Aphaea

Ancient Greek, Classical

- Temple of Zeus, Olympia
- Temple of Hephaestus
- Bassae, Temple of Apollo
- Parthenon, Athens
- Sounion, Temple of Poseidon

Renaissance and Baroque

- The *Tempietto* by Donato Bramante, in the courtyard of San Pietro in Montorio, Rome
- Palace of Charles V, Granada, 1527, circular arcade in the courtyard, under Ionic in the upper storey
- Basilica Palladiana, in Vicenza, Andrea Palladio, 1546 on, arcade under Ionic above
- Valladolid Cathedral, Juan de Herrera, begun 1589

Neoclassical and Greek Revival

- [Brandenburg Gate](#), Berlin, 1788
- [The Grange](#), Northington, 1804
- [Lord Hill's Column](#), [Shrewsbury, England](#), 1814, 133 feet 6 inches (40.69 m) high
- [Neue Wache](#), Berlin, 1816
- [Royal High School](#), [Edinburgh](#), completed 1829
- [Walhalla](#), [Regensburg](#), Bavaria, 1842
- [Propylaea](#), Munich, 1854

United States

- [Second Bank of the United States](#), [Philadelphia](#), 1824
- [Naval Medical Center Portsmouth](#), 1827, pedimented temple front with ten columns
- [Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial](#) in [Put-in-Bay, Ohio](#), is the world's tallest and most massive Doric column at 352 feet (107 m).
- [Harding Tomb](#) in [Marion, Ohio](#), is a circular Greek temple design with Doric columns.

Gallery



The ruins of the Temple of Poseidon from Sounion (Greece), 444–440 BC



Exterior of the Great Tomb of Lefkadia, circa 300 BC^[13]



Capital on the Parthenon from Athens



Venus Temple at Hadrian's Villa in Tivoli (Italy), detail from the roof



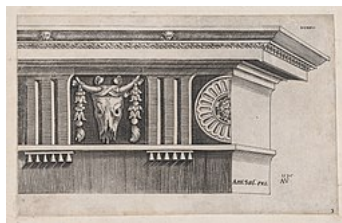
Fragment of an Ancient Roman Doric frieze in Palestrina (Italy)



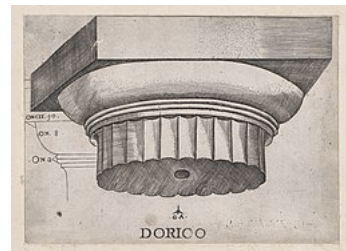
Temple of Athena, Assos in Turkey



Renaissance marble altar enframement, circa 1530–1550, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York City)



Engraving of a Doric entablature from *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae*, 1536, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art



Engraving of a Doric capital from *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae*, circa 1537, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art



The monumental fireplace in the ballroom of the Palace of Fontainebleau (France), with a Doric frieze on it



Door between a pair of Doric pilasters, in Montpellier (France)



Door between a pair of Doric pilasters, in Enkhuizen (the Netherlands)



Capital of a Doric pilaster from Lviv (Ukraine)



Die Sünde, by Franz Stuck, from 1893, in a frame with a pair of engaged Doric columns



Interior of the Metropolitan Museum of Art with Doric columns



The entrance of La Sorbonne from Paris, with a pair of Doric columns and an entablature with triglyphs and empty metopes

See also

- Geison

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2. Summerson, 13–14
3. Vitruvius. *De architectura* (<http://www.vitruvius.be/boek4h1.htm>). p. 4.1. Retrieved 25 April 2020.
4. Summerson, 14–15
5. Palladio, *First Book*, Chapter 12 (<https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=BNBva2kKm0wC&pg=PA17>)
6. Summerson, 13–15, 126
7. Ian Jenkins, *Greek Architecture And Its Sculpture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2006), 15.
8. Jenkins, 16.
9. Jenkins, 16–17.
10. Robin F. Rhodes, "Early Corinthian Architecture and the Origins of the Doric Order" in the *American Journal of Archaeology* 91, no. 3 (1987), 478.
11. "... they measured a man's foot, and finding its length the sixth part of his height, they gave the column a similar proportion, that is, they made its height, including the capital, six times the thickness of the shaft, measured at the base. Thus the Doric order obtained its proportion, its strength, and its beauty, from the human figure." (Vitruvius, iv.6) "The successors of these people, improving in taste, and preferring a more slender proportion, assigned seven diameters to the height of the Doric column." (Vitruvius, iv.8)
12. Summerson, 41–43
13. Fullerton, Mark D. (2020). *Art & Archaeology of The Roman World*. Thames & Hudson. p. 87. ISBN 978-0-500-051931.

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- Alexander Tzonis, *Classical Architecture: The Poetics of Order* ([Alexander Tzonis website \(http://www.tzonis.com\)](#))

External links

 Media related to [Doric columns](#) at Wikimedia Commons

- [Classical orders and elements \(http://www.institute-of-traditional-architecture.org/self-study/classical-elements/\)](http://www.institute-of-traditional-architecture.org/self-study/classical-elements/)

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